



General Assembly

January Session, 2017

Amendment

LCO No. 6800



Offered by:
SEN. SUZIO, 13th Dist.

To: Subst. Senate Bill No. 894

File No. 161

Cal. No. 108

"AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE STATE OVERSIGHT COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES."

1 Strike section 1 in its entirety and substitute the following in lieu
2 thereof:

3 "Section 1. Section 17a-4 of the general statutes is repealed and the
4 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2017*):

5 (a) There shall be a State [Advisory] Oversight Council on Children
6 and Families which shall consist of [nineteen members as follows: (1)
7 Thirteen members appointed by the Governor, including two persons
8 who are child care professionals, two persons eighteen to twenty-five
9 years of age, inclusive, served by the Department of Children and
10 Families, one child psychiatrist licensed to practice medicine in this
11 state and one attorney who has expertise in legal issues related to
12 children and youth and seven persons who shall be representative of
13 young persons, parents and others interested in the delivery of services
14 to children and youths, including child protection, behavioral health,
15 juvenile justice and prevention services, at least four of whom shall be

16 parents, foster parents or family members of children who have
17 received, or are receiving, behavioral health services, child welfare
18 services or juvenile services; and (2) six members representing the
19 regional advisory councils established pursuant to section 17a-30,
20 appointed one each by the members of each council. On and after
21 October 1, 2014, no more than half the members of the council shall be
22 persons who receive income from a private practice or any public or
23 private agency that delivers mental health, substance abuse, child
24 abuse prevention and treatment, child welfare services or juvenile
25 services. Members of the council shall serve without compensation,
26 except for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their
27 duties. [The Department of Children and Families shall provide the
28 council with funding to facilitate the participation of those members
29 representing families and youth, as well as for other administrative
30 support services.] Members shall serve on the council for terms of two
31 years each and no member shall serve for more than three consecutive
32 terms. The commissioner shall be an ex-officio member of the council
33 without vote and shall attend its meetings] the following members: (1)
34 Two members appointed by the speaker of the House of
35 Representatives, one of whom shall have expertise in providing
36 services through the family assessment response program operated by
37 the Department of Children and Families and one of whom shall be an
38 advocate for children and youths; (2) two members appointed by the
39 president pro tempore of the Senate, one of whom shall have expertise
40 in providing behavioral health services to children and youths served
41 by the Department of Children and Families and one of whom shall be
42 an attorney with expertise in legal issues related to children and
43 youths; (3) two members appointed by the majority leader of the
44 House of Representatives, one of whom shall be between the ages of
45 eighteen and twenty-five and a former recipient of in-home services or
46 supervision provided by the Department of Children and Families and
47 one of whom shall be a behavioral health advocate who serves on the
48 Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council established pursuant
49 to section 17a-22j; (4) two members appointed by the majority leader of
50 the Senate, one of whom shall be a child psychiatrist licensed to

51 practice medicine in this state and one of whom shall be a behavioral
52 health advocate who serves on the Behavioral Health Partnership
53 Oversight Council established pursuant to section 17a-22j; (5) two
54 members appointed by the minority leader of the House of
55 Representatives, one of whom shall be between the ages of eighteen
56 and twenty-five and a former foster child and one of whom shall be a
57 provider of therapeutic foster care; (6) two members appointed by the
58 minority leader of the Senate, one of whom shall be an attorney with
59 expertise in legal issues related to children and youths and one of
60 whom shall be a practicing member of the Connecticut Chapter of the
61 American Academy of Pediatrics; (7) one member appointed by the
62 chairpersons of the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee
63 established pursuant to section 46b-121n, who shall be a member of
64 such committee and an advocate for or provider of services to children
65 and youths; (8) the chairpersons and ranking members of the joint
66 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of
67 matters relating to appropriations, children, human services and the
68 judiciary; (9) the Child Advocate, or the Child Advocate's designee;
69 (10) the Chief Public Defender, or the Chief Public Defender's
70 designee; and (11) six members appointed one each by the members of
71 the regional advisory councils established pursuant to section 17a-30,
72 who shall be parents, foster parents or family members of children or
73 youths who have received or currently receive behavioral health
74 services, child welfare services or juvenile services. The Commissioner
75 of Children and Families shall be an ex-officio member of the council
76 without vote. Any member who fails to attend three consecutive
77 meetings or fifty per cent of all meetings during any calendar year
78 shall be deemed to have resigned. The council shall elect a chairperson
79 and vice-chairperson, [to act in the chairperson's absence] who shall
80 not be representatives of the executive or legislative branches, from
81 among its members.

82 (b) The [council] State Oversight Council on Children and Families
83 shall meet [quarterly] bimonthly, and more often upon the call of the
84 [chair] chairperson and vice-chairperson or a majority of the members.

85 The council's meetings shall be held at locations that facilitate
86 participation by members of the public, and its agenda and minutes
87 shall be posted on the [department's] Department of Children and
88 Families' Internet web site and the Internet web site of the General
89 Assembly. A majority of the members [in office] present, but not less
90 than [six] twelve members, shall constitute a quorum. The council shall
91 have complete access to all records of the institutions and facilities of
92 the department in furtherance of its duties, while at all times
93 protecting the right of privacy of all individuals involved, as provided
94 in section 17a-28.

95 (c) The duties of the [council] State Oversight Council on Children
96 and Families shall be to: (1) [Recommend to the commissioner
97 programs, legislation or other matters which will improve services for
98 children and youths, including behavioral health services; (2)] Monitor,
99 track and evaluate the policies and practices of the Department of
100 Children and Families with respect to safety, permanency and well-
101 being outcomes for children and youths, including, but not limited to,
102 policies and practices related to ensuring that (A) children and youths
103 are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect; (B) children
104 and youths are safely placed in their homes whenever possible and
105 appropriate; (C) children and youths have permanency and stability in
106 their living situations; (D) the continuity of children and youth's family
107 relationships and connections is preserved; (E) families have enhanced
108 capacity to provide for the needs of children and youths; (F) children
109 and youths receive appropriate services to meet their educational
110 needs; and (G) children and youths receive adequate services to meet
111 their physical and mental health needs; (2) submit policy and
112 legislative recommendations to the Commissioner of Children and
113 Families and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly
114 having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and children
115 that will improve safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for
116 children and youths, including, but not limited to, recommendations
117 concerning behavioral health services; (3) annually review and advise
118 the commissioner and the joint standing committees of the General

119 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and
120 children regarding the proposed budget; [(3) interpret to the
121 community at large the policies, duties and programs of the
122 department; (4) issue any reports it deems necessary to the Governor
123 and the Commissioner of Children and Families; (5) assist in the
124 development of and review and comment on the strategic plan
125 developed by the department pursuant to subsection (b) of section 17a-
126 3; (6)] (4) receive on a quarterly basis from the commissioner a status
127 report on the department's progress in [carrying out the strategic plan]
128 promoting safety, permanency and well-being outcomes, including,
129 but not limited to, data regarding such outcomes categorized by race,
130 ethnicity, age cohorts, departmental region and, where practicable,
131 disability status; (5) receive on an annual basis, beginning not later
132 than January 1, 2018, from the joint standing committee of the General
133 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children,
134 information contained in the annual report card maintained pursuant
135 to section 2-53m that is relevant to the duties of the council; [(7)] (6)
136 independently monitor the department's progress in achieving its
137 goals as expressed in the strategic plan developed by the department
138 pursuant to subsection (b) of section 17a-3, as amended by this act, and
139 any outcome measures established by the council; and [(8)] (7) offer
140 assistance and provide an outside perspective to the department so
141 that it may be able to achieve the goals expressed in the strategic plan
142 and implement the recommendations of the council.

143 (d) Not later than July 1, 2018, and annually thereafter, the State
144 Oversight Council on Children and Families shall submit a report, in
145 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing
146 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
147 relating to appropriations and children. Such report shall include, but
148 need not be limited to, (1) findings and recommendations regarding
149 the policies and practices of the Department of Children and Families;
150 (2) information regarding the impact of such policies on safety,
151 permanency and well-being outcomes for children and youths,
152 including those outcomes described in subdivision (1) of subsection (c)

153 of this section; and (3) if applicable, legislative recommendations.

154 (e) Not later than thirty days after receipt of the report submitted
155 pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, the joint standing
156 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
157 relating to appropriations and children shall, in conjunction with the
158 chairperson and vice-chairperson of the State Oversight Council on
159 Children and Families, hold an informational hearing on such report.

160 (f) The State Oversight Council on Children and Families may,
161 without remuneration from the state, be staffed by an organization or
162 educational institution with the necessary expertise and resources to
163 assist in the administration of the work of the council."